



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPRINGFIELD MAN MAY FACE LIFE SENTENCE FOR CHILD PORN INDICTMENT

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that a Springfield, Mo., man who was indicted by a federal grand jury may face a sentence of life imprisonment for the sexual exploitation of a minor for the purpose of producing child pornography, and for possession of child pornography.

Stephen M. Taylor, 48, of Springfield, was originally charged in a two-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield on June 3, 2004. **Taylor** was also charged in a superseding indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield on July 12, 2004. The superseding indictment replaces the original indictment.

The superseding indictment, Graves explained, includes additional allegations relevant to sentencing. “This marks the first case in this district with a mandatory life sentence for child pornography violations,” Graves said. “Such a severe penalty reflects the high priority we place on protecting children from exploitation.”

A life sentence is mandatory under the statutory changes adopted by Congress in the PROTECT Act of 2003, Graves said. The PROTECT Act increased penalties in some child pornography cases, including the “two strikes” provision that requires life imprisonment for offenders who have committed two serious abuse offenses against a child.

According to the superseding indictment, **Taylor** has previously been convicted of one or more state sex offenses. After learning of **Taylor’s** prior convictions for sex offenses against children, federal prosecutors sought the superseding indictment.

Count One of the federal indictment alleges that, between November and December 2003, **Taylor** persuaded or coerced a minor male to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing visual depictions of such conduct.

Count Two of the federal indictment alleges that **Taylor** was in possession of child pornography on May 31, 2004. Today's superseding indictment also alleges that **Taylor** caused a minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing those photographs.

The superseding indictment includes additional sentencing allegations. The federal indictment alleges that one or more victims in each count was under 12 years of age, that **Taylor** exercised supervisory control over the minor or minors involved in each count, and that **Taylor** committed each of the alleged offenses as part of a pattern of activity involving prohibited sexual conduct.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rose A. Barber. It was investigated by the Springfield, Mo., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow